

**JANUARY 3, 2006 MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING – CITY COUNCIL – CITY OF NEWTON**

The Newton City Council held a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 3, 2006 in the Council Chambers at City Hall with the following present: Mayor Robert Mullinax, Council Members Wayne Dellinger, Tom Rowe, Anne Stedman, Al Gaither, Tom Dixon, Mayor Pro Tem Roy Johnson, City Attorney Larry Pitts, City Manager Ed Burchins, Assistant City Manager Glenn J. Pattishall, and City Clerk Beunice “Bootsie” Roberts.

**Item 1        Call to Order**

Mayor Mullinax called the meeting to order and welcomed citizens in the audience.

**Item 2        Opening**

Mayor Pro Tem Roy Johnson gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item 3        Approval of minutes of the December 14, 2005 regular meeting**

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson, seconded by Council Member Gaither, that the minutes be approved.

**Item 4        Consideration of Approval of Consent Agenda Item**

A motion was made by Council Member Stedman, seconded by Council Member Rowe, and unanimously adopted that the following item on the Consent Agenda be approved.

**A.        Consideration of a Budget Ordinance amendment for Air Quality Expenses (adopted)**

ORDINANCE #2006-1 ATTACHED

**Item 5        Comments from the public**

Mayor Mullinax asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak and there was none.

**Item 6        Old Business**

**A.        Approval of Electric Boiler Rate Rider and add to the City of Newton Manual of Fees and Charges.**

City Manager Burchins introduced Marty Wilson and asked him to make a report on the Electric Boiler Rate Rider.

Mr. Wilson stated that a representative for Catawba County inquired in November 2005 if the City of Newton would establish an electric rate that would provide an incentive for the Justice Center to solely use an electric boiler as opposed to a gas

boiler system. The representatives requested a “breakeven” rate so that the county could continue using the electric boiler.

Mr. Wilson stated that the Electric Boiler Rate would be available to anyone on Rate Schedule “I” Industrial Service or “G” General Service with a monthly demand of 500kW or greater contingent upon the customer having both an operational electric and gas boiler used for space heating only with a minimum boiler rating of 200kW.

Mr. Wilson stated that this request has come before the Council before at which time the gas rates had escalated. Mr. Wilson reported that depending on the cost, the county could get a credit and if we could save the county money, it would save all citizens on our electric service money.

Mr. Robert Vice, of Southeastern Consulting, stated that he and his staff have established this Electric Rate Rider to provide a credit that would equate to an equal cost of gas and electric energy. Mr. Vice reminded the Council that the provisions placed in the rate rider ensures that the City will recoup its cost for purchased power and other costs regardless of the cost for gas.

A lengthy discussion continued about the Electric Rate Rider including comments about the electric rate rider being a special interest situation, what happens in case of interruptible service, involvement with industries, and to consider adopting the rate at a later time?

Council Members Dixon and Gaither stated that it would be a good public relations move on behalf of the city to adopt the rate and would show a positive working relationship with the county.

A motion was made by Council Member Dixon, seconded by Council Member Gaither to adopt the Electric Rate Rider and add to the City of Newton Manual of Fees and Charges. Council Member Dellinger voted against it. The motion carried five to one.

ORDINANCE #2006-2 ATTACHED

**Item 7**      **NEW BUSINESS**

None

**Item 8**      **CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

None

**Item 9**      **Questions from Mayor and Council**

Mayor Mullinax asked Public Works Director Marty Wilson to give a report on the clean-up efforts after the very traumatic ice storm we had in December.

Mr. Wilson reported that on the Monday following the ice storm, two clean-up crews were contracted to assist city crews with the clean-up.

Mr. Wilson stated that the crews have cleaned up two of the four quadrants, northwest and northeast, and were at that time working on the southwest and southeast quadrants.

Mr. Wilson stated that there was a considerable amount of debris from the storm and that the contractors and city crews are working as hard as they can to get it cleaned up in a professional manner.

Mr. Wilson stated that the crews are using specialized equipment to get the work done and one city employee was assigned with each contracted crew to keep the work process safe and efficient.

Council Member Dixon questioned some of the work ethics of the crews that concerned him and asked Mr. Wilson to check on their work performance.

Council Member Gaither questioned the budgetary costs for problems that occur after snow and ice storms and stated that you never know what the cost would be until after the clean up process is completed.

City Manager Burchins stated the city has been working with tree trimmers, but most of them have been called to other cities because of the hurricanes, etc. and these crews can't be depended on to do the work that the city needs at this time.

City Manager Burchins stated that he and the staff are looking into organizing a tree trimming program for the city.

Council Member Dellinger stated that the city's biggest problems are the trees. Council Member Dellinger asked if the city ever considered getting permission to cut down trees that are habitual problems to the city, those near transformers, and would it be beneficial to do that?

City Manager Burchins stated that he would certainly consider Council Member Dellinger's suggestion and that in the meantime, city crews are working very hard to get the debris and tree limbs moved.

Mayor Mullinax briefly reviewed a letter he received from NCDOT concerning the Railroad Crossing Project Agreement on 13<sup>th</sup> Street in which the city rejected. Mayor Mullinax asked City Manager Burchins to contact NCDOT again about the city's position concerning the agreement.

Mayor Mullinax reported that the Chamber of Commerce is having its annual membership dinner on February 7, 2006 and he felt that the city should have a presence at that gathering. He asked the Council if they would consider canceling the February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting to attend this event.

A motion was made by Council Member Dixon, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson, and unanimously approved that the February 7<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting be canceled to allow the Mayor and Council to attend the Chamber event.

City Manager Burchins reminded the Council of the City Council Planning Work Shop on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and February 3<sup>rd</sup>. The location will be announced.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. Mullinax, Mayor

Beunice "Bootsie" R. Roberts, City Clerk